

MAR. 29. 2005 5:56PM

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 29, 2005

NO. 488

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The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Last November, the Senate approved by unanimous consent Senate Resolution 447. That resolution expressed the sense of the Senate that you should exercise your constitutional authority to pardon posthumously John Arthur "Jack" Johnson for his violation of the Mann Act. Mr. Johnson's conviction was motivated by nothing more than the color of his skin. As such, it injured not only Mr. Johnson but also our nation as a whole.

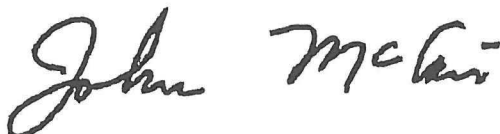
The story of Jack Johnson was largely forgotten for decades by many. In recent months, however, Americans have focused rightly on the injustice done to Mr. Johnson some 90 years ago. In 1913, Johnson was sentenced to one year and a day in federal prison. His crime was transporting a white woman across state lines for an "immoral purpose."

Race was the shameful motivation for the prosecution and conviction of Jack Johnson. Against heavy odds, Mr. Johnson became the first African American heavyweight boxing champion of the world, and his intimate relationships crossed the color line. Johnson's rightful custody of the championship belt and his romantic relations were an affront to those who held the pernicious belief that Black Americans merit less than the full rights and freedoms of citizenship.

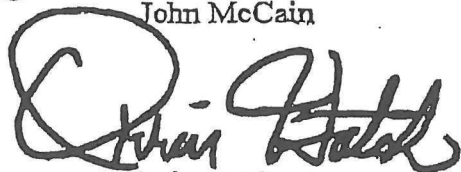
Mr. President, in your recent Inaugural Address, you stated that "our country must abandon all the habits of racism, because we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time." Such wise words are seldom spoken – and even more rarely given full meaning by just action.

We know, however, that your words are not empty, and so it is our sincere hope that you will help relieve our nation from the weight of racism and bigotry by granting a posthumous pardon to Jack Johnson. Your exculpation of Mr. Johnson would be a strong and necessary symbol to the world of America's continuing resolve to live up to the noble ideals of freedom, opportunity, and equal justice for all.

Sincerely,



John McCain



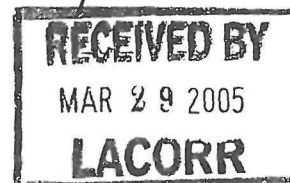
Orrin G. Hatch



Harry Reid



Edward M. Kennedy



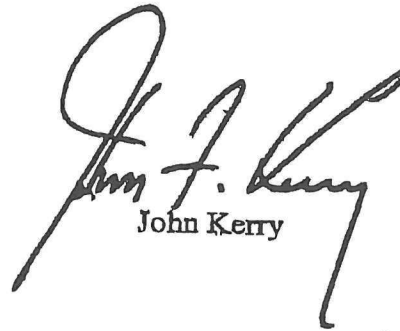
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Ted Stevens



John Kerry